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STATE FOR WHA/CCA, WHA/CAR-BENT, USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CU](#) [ETTC](#) [DR](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: NSC-DIRECTED
COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY REVIEW REGARDING SUSPENSION OF TITLE III
OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. STATE 57782

[1](#)B. 05 SANTO DOMINGO 05409

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Dominican President Fernandez is continuing his low-profile approach to Cuban issues. Interaction is limited to educational, sports, and technical exchanges, visits to Cuba by Dominican tourists, and residence in Cuba by a few church-affiliated social workers. There are approximately 200-250 Dominican medical students in Cuba, with 50 graduating each year and being replaced by 50 more. An annual meeting of the Cuban-Dominican mixed commission took place in Havana March 27-29 and produced a plan to continue these exchanges in 2006-2007. Embassy considers that U.S. national interests and Dominican government actions justify continued renewal of the waiver of Title III of the Libertad Act with regard to Dominican businesses. End summary.

Dominican Businesses and Cuba
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Embassy considers that U.S. national interests and the actions of the Dominican government justify a renewal of the waiver of Title III of the Libertad Act with regard to Dominican businesses that may be involved in joint ventures with the Cuban government or have significant trade with Cuba. A recent Embassy inquiry with MFA Director for the Americas Francia Sencion yielded no new information on any investments or joint ventures that would trigger the Title III sanctions. There is little Dominican investment in Cuba and the Embassy is not aware of any conflict between Dominican investors and U.S. citizens regarding property claims in Cuba. The Embassy has not received any complaints by any U.S. citizens against any Dominican company related to any investment in Cuba or regarding Dominican)Cuban trade links.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Cuba has proposed a trade accord with the Dominican Republic; Embassy sources in the foreign ministry indicate that the Dominican side &is studying the proposal.8

Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba
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[1](#)4. (SBU) The administration of President Fernandez has continued to take a low profile on Cuban issues. Many Dominicans, including President Fernandez, reject the Cuban dictatorship as a model for the region. Even so, the

Dominican Government rarely criticizes the Havana regime for its lack of democracy or its human rights violations.

¶5. (SBU) In international organizations the Dominicans typically join a regional consensus on votes on controversial issues. Embassy is unaware of any votes on Cuban issues since our last report in which the Dominican Republic supported Cuba, other than the UN resolution against the so-called U.S. embargo (Ref B).

Cuban-Dominican Technical Cooperation and Exchanges

¶6. (SBU) Technical cooperation is arranged between the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency in the Dominican Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Investment in Cuba. Low-level sports exchanges involving trainers are ongoing.

¶7. (SBU) According to the MFA, there are approximately 200-250 Dominican medical students in Cuba at any one time, with about 50 or so graduating each year and being replaced by 50 more. On March 30, 2006 a group of 41 students departed for Cuba. A delegation of Cuban doctors recently visited the Dominican Republic to promote Cuba as a destination for health care. According to new reports, approximately 500 Dominicans travel to Cuba each year to receive medical care. A few Cuban doctors are reported to be working in the Dominican countryside providing basic medical services to underserved areas, although these were not mentioned in the latest bilateral cooperation plan.

¶8. (SBU) According to the Technical Secretariat, the Dominican agency that provides subsidized food to low-income Dominicans (INESPRE) has agreed to provide technical assistance to Cuba. Four Cuban experts met with Dominican officials here early this year to discuss food distribution

and marketing of various food products. The Dominican Petroleum Refinery and the Dominican Telecommunications Institute are also drafting accords with their Cuban counterparts for technical exchanges, but these have not yet been completed.

Cuban-Dominican Mixed Commission

¶9. (SBU) One high-level visit has taken place since our last report: the sixth annual meeting of cooperation between the Technical Secretary of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration of the Republic of Cuba, in Havana, March 27-29. The Dominican delegation of 12 officials was led by Technical Under Secretary of the Presidency America Bastidas; the Cuban side was led by Orlando Requeijo, Vice Minister of Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration. The chief Dominican official also met separately with Cuban vice ministers of public health, agriculture, and basic industry and directors in the education and foreign ministries.

¶10. (SBU) The commission agreed on a plan of collaboration for exchanges in the coming year. Embassy has obtained the signed document, mostly covering hoped-for technical exchanges and sales of Cuban biomedical products, and reiterating an intention to negotiate a trade agreement. The Dominican side stated its interest in continuing the contracting of 44 Cuban sports technicians and trainers via the firm CUBADEPORTES and commented "very positively" on the performance of Cuban coaches in the Dominican Republic. The Dominicans requested further support for a literacy program, begun on a pilot basis last year with Cuban trainers, with financial support from Venezuela; the Cuban officials undertook to follow up with Venezuela.

¶11. (U) Embassy will fax the complete document to WHA/CAR - Dominican Republic desk, attn William Bent.
HERTELL